

Attorney's Docket No. K&A 00-0072  
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**APPLICATION**

**FOR UNITED STATES LETTERS PATENT**

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**SPECIFICATION**

TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

BE IT KNOWN THAT WE, **NEBIAT T. GETACHEW**, a citizen of ETHIOPIA, and **LEON KAHSSAI**, a citizen of UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, and **SENAIT GETACHEW**, a citizen of CANADA, have invented a new and useful **SEPARABLE CONTAINER APPARATUS** of which the following is a specification:

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# SEPARABLE CONTAINER APPARATUS

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## BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

### Field of the Invention

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The present invention relates to a separably-attached containers and more particularly pertains to a new separable container apparatus for providing a convenient means of storing food products.

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### Description of the Prior Art

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The use of a separably-attached containers is known in the prior art. More specifically, a separably-attached containers heretofore devised and utilized are known to consist basically of familiar, expected and obvious structural configurations, notwithstanding the myriad of designs encompassed by the crowded prior art which have been developed for the fulfillment of countless objectives and requirements.

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Known prior art includes U.S. Patent No. Des. 208,806; U.S. Patent No. 4,834,253; U.S. Patent No. 4,866,234; U.S. Patent No. 5,101,997; U.S. Patent No. 5,735,422; and U.S. Patent No. 4,139,114.

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While these devices fulfill their respective, particular objectives and requirements, the aforementioned patents do not disclose a new separable container apparatus. The inventive device  
5 includes containers each having an open top, a bottom wall, and a peripheral side wall assembly securely and integrally attached to and extending upwardly from the bottom wall with the containers being detachably connected to one another to essentially form a single structure having a plurality of storage compartments; and  
10 also includes lids being removably attached to any combination of attached containers.

In these respects, the separable container apparatus according to the present invention substantially departs from the conventional  
15 concepts and designs of the prior art, and in so doing provides an apparatus primarily developed for the purpose of providing a convenient means of storing food products.

## **SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

20 In view of the foregoing disadvantages inherent in the known types of separably-attached containers now present in the prior art, the present invention provides a new separable container apparatus construction wherein the same can be utilized for providing a  
25 convenient means of storing food products.

The general purpose of the present invention, which will be described subsequently in greater detail, is to provide a new separable container apparatus which has many of the advantages of  
30 the separably-attached containers mentioned heretofore and many novel features that result in a new separable container apparatus which is not anticipated, rendered obvious, suggested, or even

implied by any of the prior art separably-attached containers, either alone or in any combination thereof.

To attain this, the present invention generally comprises  
5 containers each having an open top, a bottom wall, and a peripheral  
side wall assembly securely and integrally attached to and  
extending upwardly from the bottom wall with the containers being  
detachably connected to one another to essentially form a single  
structure having a plurality of storage compartments; and also  
10 includes lids being removably attached to any combination of  
attached containers.

There has thus been outlined, rather broadly, the more  
important features of the invention in order that the detailed  
15 description thereof that follows may be better understood, and in  
order that the present contribution to the art may be better  
appreciated. There are additional features of the invention that  
will be described hereinafter and which will form the subject matter  
of the claims appended hereto.

In this respect, before explaining at least one embodiment of  
the invention in detail, it is to be understood that the invention is  
not limited in its application to the details of construction and to  
the arrangements of the components set forth in the following  
25 description or illustrated in the drawings. The invention is capable  
of other embodiments and of being practiced and carried out in  
various ways. Also, it is to be understood that the phraseology and  
terminology employed herein are for the purpose of description and  
should not be regarded as limiting.

As such, those skilled in the art will appreciate that the  
conception, upon which this disclosure is based, may readily be

utilized as a basis for the designing of other structures, methods and systems for carrying out the several purposes of the present invention. It is important, therefore, that the claims be regarded as including such equivalent constructions insofar as they do not  
5 depart from the spirit and scope of the present invention.

Further, the purpose of the foregoing abstract is to enable the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and the public generally, and especially the scientists, engineers and practitioners in the art who  
10 are not familiar with patent or legal terms or phraseology, to determine quickly from a cursory inspection the nature and essence of the technical disclosure of the application. The abstract is neither intended to define the invention of the application, which is measured by the claims, nor is it intended to be limiting as to the  
15 scope of the invention in any way.

It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide a new separable container apparatus which has many of the advantages of the separably-attached containers mentioned  
20 heretofore and many novel features that result in a new separable container apparatus which is not anticipated, rendered obvious, suggested, or even implied by any of the prior art separably-attached containers, either alone or in any combination thereof.

25 It is another object of the present invention to provide a new separable container apparatus which may be easily and efficiently manufactured and marketed.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a new  
30 separable container apparatus which is of a durable and reliable construction.

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An even further object of the present invention is to provide a new separable container apparatus which is susceptible of a low cost of manufacture with regard to both materials and labor, and which accordingly is then susceptible of low prices of sale to the consuming public, thereby making such separable container apparatus economically available to the buying public.

Still yet another object of the present invention is to provide a new separable container apparatus which provides in the apparatuses and methods of the prior art some of the advantages thereof, while simultaneously overcoming some of the disadvantages normally associated therewith.

Still another object of the present invention is to provide a new separable container apparatus for providing a convenient means of storing food products.

Yet another object of the present invention is to provide a new separable container apparatus which includes containers each having an open top, a bottom wall, and a peripheral side wall assembly securely and integrally attached to and extending upwardly from the bottom wall with the containers being detachably connected to one another to essentially form a single structure having a plurality of storage compartments; and also includes lids being removably attached to any combination of attached containers.

Still yet another object of the present invention is to provide a new separable container apparatus that allows the user to compactly store food products in a single structure with the structure being separable into individual containers.

Even still another object of the present invention is to provide a new separable container apparatus that is easy and convenient to attach the containers together to form a single cylindrical structure.

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These together with other objects of the invention, along with the various features of novelty which characterize the invention, are pointed out with particularity in the claims annexed to and forming a part of this disclosure. For a better understanding of the invention, its operating advantages and the specific objects attained by its uses, reference should be made to the accompanying drawings and descriptive matter in which there are illustrated preferred embodiments of the invention.

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#### **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

The invention will be better understood and objects other than those set forth above will become apparent when consideration is given to the following detailed description thereof. Such description makes reference to the annexed drawings wherein:

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Figure 1 is a perspective view of a new separable container apparatus according to the present invention.

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Figure 2 is a perspective view of a second embodiment of the present invention.

Figure 3 is a perspective view of a third embodiment of the present invention.

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Figure 4 is a top plan view of the first embodiment of the present invention.

Figure 5 is a side elevational view of the first embodiment of the present invention.

Figure 6 is a side elevational view of the second embodiment  
5 of the present invention.

Figure 7 is an exploded side elevational view of the first embodiment of the present invention.

10 Figure 8 is a cross-sectional view of the third embodiment of the present invention.

### **DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT**

15 With reference now to the drawings, and in particular to Figures 1 through 8 thereof, a new separable container apparatus embodying the principles and concepts of the present invention and generally designated by the reference numeral 10 will be described.

20 As best illustrated in Figures 1 through 8, the separable container apparatus 10 generally comprises containers 11-13 each having an open top, a bottom wall, and a peripheral side wall assembly 14-16 securely and integrally attached to and extending upwardly from the bottom wall with the containers 11-13 being  
25 detachably connected to one another to essentially form a single structure having a plurality of storage compartments. The peripheral side wall assembly 14-16 of each container 11-13 includes a first side wall 14, a second side wall 15, and a third side wall 16. Each of the first and second side walls 14,15 has a top  
30 edge 17,19 and a bottom edge 18,41 with the first and second side walls 14,15 of one of the containers 11-13 being detachably attached to the first and second side walls 14,15 of the others of the



containers 11-13. The first side wall 14 of one container 11-13 is detachably attached to the second side wall 15 of another container 11-13. Each of the containers 11-13 includes an elongate first flange member 21 securely and conventionally attached to an exterior of the first side wall 14 and extending along a length of the top edge 17 thereof, and also includes a first recessed portion 24 disposed in the first side wall 14 and extending along a length of the bottom edge 18 thereof, and further includes a first slot 25 disposed in the first recessed portion 24 and extending the length of the bottom edge 18. Each elongate first flange member 21 includes a first portion 22 extending outwardly generally perpendicular of a respective first side wall 14, and also includes a second portion 23 being integrally attached to the first portion 22 and being angled relative to the first portion 22 and being disposed downwardly. Each of the containers 11-13 further includes a second slot 26 disposed in an exterior of the second wall 15 and extending along a length of the top edge 19 thereof and being adapted to receive the first flange member 21 of another container 11-13, and also includes an elongate second flange member 29 being securely and conventionally attached to an exterior of the second side wall 15 and extending outwardly and along a length of the bottom edge 41 thereof and being adapted to be received in the first recessed portion 24 and the first slot 25 of another container 11-13. Each of the second slots 26 is essentially angled and has a first portion 27 which extends into the second wall 14 and also has a second portion 28 which is angled relative to the first portion 27 and which is continuous of the first portion 27 and which is disposed downwardly. Each second flange member 29 includes a first portion 30 extending outwardly generally perpendicular of a respective second side wall 15, and also includes a second portion

31 being integrally attached to the first portion 30 and being angled relative to the first portion 30 and being disposed upwardly.

Lids 32,33,37 are removably attached to any combination of attached containers 11-13. The lids 32,33,37 include a first lid 32 which is adapted to detachably fastened to all of the containers 11-13 being attached to one another, and also includes a second lid 33 which is adapted to detachably fasten to two of the containers 11-13 being attached to one another, and further includes a third lid 37 which is adapted to detachably fasten to one of the containers 11-

13. The containers 11-13 are detachably attached to one another to essentially form a cylindrical structure having multiple

compartments therein with the first lid 32 being circular shaped and fastenable about top edges 20 of the third side walls 16 to close

upon the open tops of the containers 11-13. Each of the containers

11-13 essentially represents 1/3 of the cylindrical structure with

two of the containers 11-13 being detachably attached to one

another to essentially form 2/3 of the cylindrical structure with the

second lid 32 having a plurality of edges 34-36 and being adapted

to fasten about the top edges 20 of the third side walls 16 of the

two containers 11-13 and about the top edge 17 of the first side

wall 14 of one of the containers 11-13 and about the top edge 19 of

the second side wall 15 of the other container 11-13. The edges of

the second lid 33 includes a curved first edge 34, a straight second

edge 35, and a straight third edge 36 which is angled more than 90

degrees and less than 180 degrees relative to the second edge 35

thereof. The third lid 37 has a plurality of edges 38-40 and is

adapted to fasten about the top edges 17,19,20 of the first, second,

and third side walls 14-16 of one of the containers 11. The edges

38-40 of the third lid 37 include a curved first edge 38, a straight

second edge 39, and a straight third edge 40 which is angled more

than 180 degrees and less than 270 degrees relative to the second edge 39 thereof. The third side walls 16 are essentially curved, and the first and second side walls 14,15 are essentially planar. All the lids 32,33,37 further have lips 42-44 extending outwardly from one or more edges 34-36,38-40 thereof for opening and removing the lids 32,33,37 from the containers 11-13.

In use, the user attaches all three of the containers 11-13 together to form the cylindrical structure and places food products in each of the containers 11-13 and closes the containers 11-13 with the first lid 32 and stores the attached containers 11-13 in a cupboard or in the refrigerator or freezer. Alternatively, the user can separate the containers 11-13 as desired either as individual containers 11-13 or with two of the containers 11-13 being attached to one another.

As to a further discussion of the manner of usage and operation of the present invention, the same should be apparent from the above description. Accordingly, no further discussion relating to the manner of usage and operation will be provided.

With respect to the above description then, it is to be realized that the optimum dimensional relationships for the parts of the invention, to include variations in size, materials, shape, form, function and manner of operation, assembly and use, are deemed readily apparent and obvious to one skilled in the art, and all equivalent relationships to those illustrated in the drawings and described in the specification are intended to be encompassed by the present invention.

Therefore, the foregoing is considered as illustrative only of the principles of the invention. Further, since numerous

modifications and changes will readily occur to those skilled in the art, it is not desired to limit the invention to the exact construction and operation shown and described, and accordingly, all suitable modifications and equivalents may be resorted to, falling within the  
5 scope of the invention.

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